Learn to Return

Schools as access-points for COVID Testing

Kick-off Meeting 17 Nov 2020 Emerging evidence suggests that with reasonable precautions, schools are not significant drivers of transmission.



There is a complex web of state and local agencies that play a role in determining aspects of in-person learning; it is up to each district to navigate these interests and align partners.



Despite this complexity, much of the decision making and mitigation strategy development is still driven to each individual district.

	District Needs	Responsible Party	Current Status
	Policy Guidance	Governor, DoH, LHJs, District	 75 case threshold set for all grades DoH is developing testing guidance for schools LHJs and DoH have toolkit for mitigation strategies (cohorting, masking)
	Mitigation Planning	District	 Each District is developing their own processes and workflow Districts manage response on their own (LHJ manages individual CICT) LHJs and DoH have toolkit for mitigation strategies (cohorting, masking)
	Access to testing and care	District & Families	 Currently no school-based testing or mechanism for schools to generate testing appointments Districts facilitate their own partnerships for reactive testing when needed
N	District-wide monitoring & decision- making support	District	 Schools have county-wide data to guide decisions. Data is largely paper based and not built with rapid response in mind.

Much of this work falls to districts who often work without access to resources, partnerships, or relevant data.

Goal: A school-centered package of tools & testing processes to support districts as they reopen



Gaps

Pilot Overview

Knowledge Exchange

Engage in dialogue with and between school communities about school safety, sharing the latest evidence and operational experience from around the county and world. This can help decipher the complex and sometimes conflicting information available and build literacy around mitigation strategies, including testing and outbreak response.

Operational Planning

Day in the life of (DILO) simulations are used to collaboratively develop, improve, and communicate plans for safely reopening schools and develops modified school experiences from a stakeholder-first perspective. These simulations help understand key questions to address (e.g., transportation, sanitation, technology), identify core personas, instructional environments, and scenarios to consider while developing plans, integrating discrete plans across departments, and communicate refined plans to relevant stakeholders.

School-based Testing

Offering testing to staff and teachers can give insights into virus prevalence in the school community, reduce anxiety of returning staff, bolster inadequate community access and mitigate potential outbreaks. However, testing operations require new tools, processes, and partners; the goal is to design a testing strategy that meets the needs of a district and facilitate partnerships to execute it.

Informatics

School administrators need information to support decision making. Existing School Information Systems (SIS) do not yet offer the functionality needed to help schools screen for symptoms, refer to testing effectively, or have a picture of basic transmission dynamics in their community. Appropriate and lightweight informatics software can help support in these areas.

Communication Support

Support districts with regular outreach to their entire school community and encourage communications staff to stay in regular contact throughout the reopening process.

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Referral for Tests

partners if needed, and

communicate plans widely within

school community.

Introduce shared processes and tools, such a symptom attestation, to identify who in the school community needs a COVID test. Establish schools as an access point for COVID tests; integrate testing with symptom attestation or screening cadence.

Evaluation

Analyze data, collect feedback, iterate on strategy, and communicate results to school community; plan for scale and sustainability. **Testing 101**

Testing is complex; specialized guidance and tools are needed to support nontraditional test sites operate successfully.



Schools can facilitate access to testing for three distinct purposes:



Building *schools as an access-point* for testing can extend convenient, no-barrier access and identify individuals who would have not self—referred for testing.

- Daily symptom and exposure attestation helps keep potential cases out of the school community.
- Individual are often infectious *prior* to symptom onset; confirmed cases trigger contact tracing and testing to help break chains of transmission and mitigate outbreaks.
- Timely testing is critical to identifying contacts & mitigating potential outbreaks.
- Providing convenient, no barrier access to testing for teachers, staff, students and their families augments uneven or inadequate access to testing and helps prevent a potential outbreak.



School-based testing could utilize two test types depending on use case.



As a starting point, we would recommend schools consider the following:



Ag+ tests receive confirmatory PCR

Informatics Overview

Safe Schools Pilot: Principles for Technology

- 1. Use available resources to maximize safety
- 2. Minimize effort for staff and school community
- 3. Learn together to solve the problems of school opening or staying open





Next Steps

How do I join?

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1 School-based Testing

- Identify a testing lead/coordinator
- Offer testing on-site
- Develop an operational plan with our team and our testing partners
- Share operational experience, and feedback to inform future policy & plans.

2 Informatics

- Daily digital symptom attestation for all students and staff that generates a referral to test.
- Share data with county and state to inform future policy & plans.

Communication Support

Communication is critical! Marketing of the school as a testing resource and following up with all individuals that are referred for a test will be important.